

Holy Cross, Daggett and St. Mark, Wallace Lutheran Churches, Michigan

November 24, 2013

Colossians 1:13-20

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Douglas MacArthur made one of the most famous speeches of World War II on March 20, 1942. He made it in the town of Terowie, Australia. MacArthur had just fled the Philippine Islands because of the Japanese invasion of the islands. He was speaking to reporters in Australia when someone asked him if he had any word about what had just happened. MacArthur, a man who never was at a loss for words, replied,

“The President of the United States ordered me to break through the Japanese lines and proceed from Corregidor to Australia for the purpose, as I understand it, of organizing the American offensive against Japan, a primary objective of which is the relief of the Philippines. I came through and I shall return.” MacArthur made this statement because he had full confidence in the ability of the US Military to go back and free the Philippines from Japanese rule.

The US Military backed up MacArthur’s words and he returned to the Philippines on October 20, 1944. He made this speech after wading ashore. **“I have returned. By the grace of Almighty God our forces stand again on Philippine soil -- soil consecrated in the blood of our two peoples. We have come, dedicated and committed, to the task of destroying every vestige of enemy control over your daily lives, and of restoring, upon a foundation of indestructible, strength, the liberties of your people.”**

MacArthur kept his promise. He was able to return to the Philippines and rescue the people because of the ability of the United States military. Paul talks to us today about a rescue mission too. He tells us about the rescue mission which our king Jesus performed. He says, **“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”**

This rescue mission made Jesus our king. How was Jesus fit to perform this rescue mission? Paul tells us the reason, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”**

“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Paul tells us Jesus is fit to be our king because he is both true God and true man in one person.

This truth allows Jesus to be able to complete his rescue mission. He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the wonderful light of his kingdom. Jesus needs to be both true God and true man to complete this rescue mission. Jesus needs to be true God because it was necessary for him to keep God’s law perfectly in our place. Jesus needed to be true God so he could suffer the pains of hell in our place. Jesus needed to be true God so he could rise from the dead.

However, Jesus was also true man. Why did Jesus have to be true man? Jesus had to be true man so he could be one of us. Jesus needed to be true man so he could serve as our substitute. How did he serve

as our substitute? Jesus served as our substitute by living under God's law and keeping it perfectly for us. Jesus also needed to be true man so he could be our sacrifice for sin. Jesus is both God and man in the same person. This allows him to be the king who rescues us.

Paul confirms this for us when he says, **"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."** Jesus' blood has bought us peace and made us one with God. It has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the wonderful light of his kingdom.

Being one of the members of this kingdom is great. Why? Listen to the benefits package Paul tells us we have. **"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."**

"And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." Paul tells us we have the benefit of being in the kingdom of the most powerful person in the universe.

Jesus is ruler over everything. He has created everything in this world. He is the greatest power in this world. He is the head of his church and he is ruling everything in this world for the good of his church. He is ruling over everything in this world for you and your good since you are a member of his church. What more could we ask for? What more could we want? How could we ask for anything more than having a king like Jesus?

We couldn't ask for anything more than what Jesus gives us. However, do you wonder if this is too good to be true? Does the little skeptic in you doubt this promise? Does this little voice say, "There is no way Jesus is in control and looking out for my good. These words are far too wonderful. The promise is impossible to keep. Besides I don't really see the promise coming true in my life. My enemies have the upper hand. My life is miserable." Do you ever feel this way?

How do we get to this place? How do we doubt Jesus' promise that he is our king who has rescued us from the dominion of darkness? How do we get to the place where we have reservation about Jesus and his ability to work all things for our good? I have a guess where this doubt comes from. I want to ask you a couple of questions before I tell you my guess. Has anyone ever broken a promise they made to you? Has anyone ever made you a promise they can't keep before?

I have and I'm sure you have too. We've all had people promise us things and not keep their promise. We've all had people promise us things they can't keep. How do you feel when someone breaks their promise to you? How do you feel when someone makes a promise they can't keep? I would imagine it

hurts. It hurts when people break promises to us. It hurts when people promise things they can't give us. Guess what? We don't like being hurt. We hate being hurt.

The hurt causes us to doubt others. It makes us cynical about the promises people make us. It builds a wall up around our hearts and makes us wary of others. We use this wall to shield our hearts because we don't like the feeling of being let down. It is easier to hide behind this wall of doubt than it is to trust someone and take the risk of being hurt again. Experience teaches us building this wall is a good idea since this wall protects our hearts from being hurt.

This wall we build around our hearts is why we doubt Jesus is our king who rescues us from the dominion of darkness. People have let us down time and time again. Why should Jesus be any different? Why can we trust he won't let us down? **"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."**

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." We can trust Jesus has rescued us from the dominion of darkness because he promises he has. This promise isn't from an ordinary person who will let us down. This promise is from the God-man himself.

Jesus cannot lie. He promises us that he is our king who has rescued us from the dominion of darkness. He proved it to us by his life, death and resurrection. This ransom price has brought us into his kingdom because he rescued us from the dominion of darkness. It means we can trust him. Doubting this promise is a sin. This doubt is a sin we all battle with. We don't always trust Jesus has rescued us. We struggle trusting his promise. How can we win this fight?

The only thing which can overcome this doubt is hearing Jesus' promise again and again and again and again. We can only hear Jesus' promise when he speaks to us. The only place he speaks to us is through his word and sacraments. I urge you make daily contact with his word. Think about your baptism often. Taste the forgiveness of sins through his body and blood here at church. How will these things drive away our doubts? They will remind us Jesus our king has rescued us from the dominion of darkness. Amen.